

Message Text

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SUBJECT: INTSUM 457 - DECEMBER 6, 1977

LONDON FOR KINSOLVING PARIS FOR NICHOLAS MURPHY

OTHER ADDRESSEES FOR CHIEFS OF MISSION

NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS

1. EGYPT-ARABS. SADAT'S DECISION TO BREAK DIPLOMATIC
RELATIONS WITH SYRIA, ALGERIA, LIBYA, IRAQ, AND SOUTH

YEMEN YESTERDAY WAS AN APPARENT REACTION TO THE DECLARATION AT THE TRIPOLI SUMMIT OF A "FREEZE" IN TIES WITH EGYPT. THE PARTICIPANTS AT TRIPOLI DID NOT DEFINE THEIR "FREEZE," BUT THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE THAT, AT LEAST UNTIL SADAT RESPONDED WITH A CLEAR RUPTURE IN RELATIONS, THE RADICALS HAD INTENDED THAT THEIR MOVE WOULD HAVE LITTLE PRACTICAL EFFECT.

2. THE TRIPOLI SUMMIT ITSELF ENDED WITH A WHIMPER, FOLLOWING FIVE DAYS OF WRANGLING. THE FORMAL DECLARATION THAT EMERGED FROM THE MEETING WAS THE LOWEST COMMON DENOMINATOR OF AGREEMENT AND ENABLED THE SESSION TO AVOID ADMITTING TOTAL FAILURE. THE TONE OF THE STATEMENT WATO THE COMMUNIQUE, THE PARTICIPANTS:

(A) AGREED TO ESTABLISH A MUTUAL SECURITY PACT, WHICH IS LITTLE MORE THAN A RESTATEMENT OF THEIR OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE ARAB LEAGUE CHARTER;

(B) CALLED FOR A FREEZE" ON DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH EGYPT; THIS APPEARED TO BE AN ATTEMPT TO DUCK THE ISSUE OF BREAKING RELATIONS;
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(C) CALLED FOR A BOYCOTT OF EGYPTIAN COMPANIES WHICH DEAL WITH ISRAEL, A MEANINGLESS THREAT SINCE NO EGYPTIAN COMPANIES DEAL WITH ISRAEL;

(D) DECIDED NOT TO TAKE PART IN ARAB LEAGUE MEETINGS HELD IN EGYPT AND MERELY TO "STUDY" THE QUESTIONS OF EGYPTIAN MEMBERSHIP IN THE LEAGUE AND OF MAINTAINING THE ORGANIZATIONS HEADQUARTERS IN CAIRO.

3. AS EXPECTED, THE COMMUNIQUE CONDEMNED SADAT'S VISIT TO ISRAEL. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT LENT TACIT SUPPORT, IN A BACKHANDED FASHION, TO THE CONCEPT OF A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT AND TURNED BACK REJECTIONIST ATTEMPTS TO BLOCK ANY MOVES TOWARD COMPROMISE. THUS, IN CRITICIZING SADAT'S MOVES, IT SAID THAT HE HAD "UNDERMINED THE POSSIBILITY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JUST AND HONORABLE PEACE" INCLUDING THE CHANCES OF OBTAINING ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND THE RECOGNITION OF PALESTINIAN "NATIONAL RIGHTS."

4. THE SUMMIT'S POSITION ON A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT APPEARS TO BE THE ISSUE THAT CAUSED THE IRAQIS TO WALK OUT. HE IRAQI DELEGATE REPORTEDLY PROPOSED THAT THE SUMMIT DECLARE ITS CATEGORIC REJECTION OF UNSC RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338 AND OF ANY BILATERAL ARAB-ISRAEL MEETINGS. WHEN THESE IDEAS WERE FIRMLY RESISTED BY SYRIA AND THE IRAQIS REALIZED THEY COULD NOT WIN OVER THE OTHER PARTICIPANTS, THEY LEFT THE MEETING. WITHOUT IRAQ, THE

"UNITED FRONT" LOST MUCH OF ITS ECONOMIC, MILITARY AND POLITICAL WEIGHT.

5. IRAQ'S PROPOSAL ADDED UP MORE TO A CONDEMNATION OF SYRIA'S ASSAD THAN OF SADAT. BAGHDAD STILL SEEMS INTENT ON HOLDING ITS OWN SUMMIT, ALTHOUGH NO DATE HAS YET BEEN SET AND NEITHER THE ARAB REJECTIONIST STATES NOR THE
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PALESTINIANS HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY WILL PARTICIPATE.

6. ALTHOUGH THE LIBYANS ARE UNDOUBTEDLY DISAPPOINTED WITH THE IRAQI BEHAVIOR, QADHAFI MUST TAKE SOME SATISFACTION THAT THE CONFERENCE OCCURRED AT ALL AND THAT SYRIA HAD JOINED IN CONDEMNING SADAT, THOUGH PERHAPS LESS FEROCIOUS THAN QADHAFI WOULD HAVE DESIRED. EQUALLY PLEASING TO THE LIBYAN LEADER WAS THE PALESTINIANS' DECLARATION OF UNITY, FRAGILE THOUGH IT MAY BE. MOREOVER, IN AN EMPTY GESTURE, THE SYRIANS JOINED THE LIBYANS IN DEPOSING SADAT AS HEAD OF THE MORIBUND CONFEDERATION OF ARAB REPUBLICS (SYRIA, LIBYA, AND EGYPT). THE OFFICES OF THE CONFEDERATION WERE ORDERED TRANSFERRED FROM CAIRO TO TRIPOLI.

7. ASSAD APPEARED TO BE THE CLEAR WINNER IN TRIPOLI. HE MANAGED TO ISOLATE IRAQ WHILE MAINTAINING HIS DETERMINATION TO PURSUE A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. WITH THE HELP OF ARAFAT AND ALGERIA, ASSAD OUTMANEUVERED

IRAQ AT EVERY TURN. HE ALSO WAS ABLE TO JOIN IN ISOLATING SADAT BUT WITHOUT CLOSING THE DOOR TO FUTURE RECONCILIATION.

8. ASSAD'S SUCCESS AT THE TRIPOLI CONFERENCE WAS UNDERCUT BY SADAT'S DIPLOMATIC BREAK. BY THIS ACTION, SADAT IS SERVING NOTICE ON ASSAD THAT THE SYRIANS MUST EITHER SUPPORT HIS INITIATIVE OR BE LEFT OUT OF THE PEACE PROCESS. SADAT HAS SHOWN HIS DETERMINATION NOT TO ALLOW ASSAD TO STRADDLE THE ISSUE OF A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT BY SIMULTANEOUSLY PROFESSING SUPPORT FOR NEGOTIATIONS AND ACTIVELY RESISTING EGYPTIAN ENDEAVORS TO OBTAIN A SETTLEMENT. SADAT IS THUS TRYING TO FORCE
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ASSAD EITHER TO SUPPORT EGYPT'S EFFORTS FULLY OR TO JOIN THE REJECTIONISTS IN OPPOSING ANY COMPROMISES WITH THE ISRAELIS. ASSAD, ONCE AGAIN FINDS HIMSELF IN A DIFFICULT POSITION AND WILL BE HARD PRESSED TO MAINTAIN THE OPTION THAT SEEMED ASSURED WHEN HE LEFT TRIPOLI.

9. THE AGGRESSIVE EGYPTIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD SADAT'S DETRACTORS WILL CREATE MUCH DISCOMFITURE IN SAUDI ARABIA. EVEN IF THE SAUDIS HAD DECIDED TO SUPPORT THE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT'S BOLD PEACE POLICY, THEY WILL BE DISTURBED BY HIS SEVERING OF RELATIONS WITH THE STATES THAT ATTENDED THE TRIPOLI SUMMIT. THEY WILL SEE THIS AS ONE MORE PRECIPITOUS EGYPTIAN ACT THAT WILL HARM THE ARAB CAUSE BY FURTHER UNDERMINING ARAB SOLIDARITY. SADAT'S ACTION PROBABLY WILL APPEAR ALL THE MORE INCOMPREHENSIBLE TO THE SAUDIS IN VIEW OF THE LACK OF TEETH IN THE TRIPOLI SUMMIT COMMUNIQUE. NEVERTHELESS, THE SAUDIS WILL AGAIN

HAVE TO SUPPORT SADAT BECAUSE HIS BREAKING OF RELATIONS WILL GIVE ADDED IMPETUS TO THE REJECTIONIST FRONT, WHILE INCREASING SADAT'S DETERMINATION TO GO IT ALONE.
(SECRET/NOFORN)

10. PALESTINIANS. OUR JERUSALEM CONSULATE GENERAL COMMENTED THAT A RECENT LETTER FROM WEST BANK AND GAZAN MAYORS TO SADAT AND THE PLO REAFFIRMING THE PLO AS PALESTINIAN SPOKESMAN IS MORE MODERATE THAN PAST WEST BANK STATEMENTS AND AVOIDS SOME OF THE USUAL RHETORIC. IN THIS VEIN, THE CONSULATE OBSERVED THAT SADAT SEEMS TO HAVE SUBSTANTIAL POPULAR SUPPORT ON THE WEST BANK FOR HIS PEACE INITIATIVES. THE ULTIMATE WEST BANK JUDGMENT AS TO SADAT'S SUCCESS OR FAILURE, HOWEVER, WILL DEPEND IN LARGE PART ON WHETHER THE ISRAELIS ARE FORTHCOMING, PARTICULARLY ON THE WEST BANK. MEANWHILE, NABLUS' MAYOR SHAKA MET WITH KING HUSSEIN DECEMBER 1 AND WILL TRAVEL TO BEIRUT TO MEET WITH PLO LEADERS, INCLUDING
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ARAFAT. (CONFIDENTIAL)

11. MOROCCO. MOROCCO IS FULLY PREPARED TO IGNORE DIPLOMATIC AND POLITICAL PRESSURES FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, INCLUDING THE US, FOR A SETTLEMENT WHICH RISKS COMPROMISING MOROCCAN SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE WESTERN SAHARA. IT IS LIKELY, HOWEVER, TO BE FLEXIBLE CONCERNING OTHER ASPECTS OF A POSSIBLE SETTLEMENT.

12. OVER THE NEXT 18 MONTHS OR SO, KING HASSAN WILL PROBABLY ORDER HIS MILITARY TO DIG IN ITS HEELS IN THE SAHARA, ACCEPTING CONTINUED HEAVY LOSSES IF NECESSARY, AND WHENEVER POSSIBLE, ACCELERATE THEIR ARMS MODERNIZATION PROGRAM. HIS REGIME WILL ALSO SUPPORT MAURITANIA TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, INCLUDING THE DISPATCH OF ADDITIONAL MILITARY UNITS AND THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF A MORE ACTIVE FRENCH ROLE. CONTINUED FRENCH COOPERATION AND SAUDI FINANCIAL SUPPORT, WHICH ARE NECESSARY FOR THE SUCCESS OF THESE SHORT-TERM PLANS, SEEM ASSURED.

13. OVER THE LONGER RUN, WE CANNOT RULE OUT A MORE AGGRESSIVE MOROCCAN MILITARY POSTURE AGAINST ALGERIA WHICH MOROCCO'S DECIDED MILITARY INFERIORITY HAS THUS FAR PRECLUDED. THOUGH IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT MOROCCO WOULD INITIATE A FULL-SCALE WAR AGAINST ALGERIA (WHICH WOULD

UNDERMINE THE STRONG ARAB BACKING IT HAS STRIVEN TO MAINTAIN), THE PRESSURES ON THE MOROCCAN LEADERSHIP FOR SOME FORM OF PUNITIVE OPERATION AGAINST THE POLISARIO ON ALGERIAN TERRITORY WILL GROW, ESPECIALLY IF MOROCCO'S SAHARAN LOSSES CONTINUE AT THEIR PRESENT HEAVY RATE. WHILE IT IS ALSO UNLIKELY THAT MOROCCO WOULD "WIN" A WAR AGAINST ALGERIA, THE MOOD IN MOROCCO IS
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SUCH THAT MILITARY RISKS MIGHT EVENTUALLY BE TAKEN TO MAKE ALGERIA PAY FOR ITS "TREACHEROUS GAMES."

14. THE CREATION OF AN ALGERIAN PUPPET STATE IN THE SAHARA--AND THE CONSEQUENT ANTICIPATED TOPPLING OF THE PRO-MOROCCAN REGIME IN MAURITANIA--WOULD, FROM THE MOROCCAN STANDPOINT, PERMANENTLY TIP THE BALANCE OF POWER IN NORTH AFRICA IN FAVOR OF ALGERIA AND THREATEN THE EXISTENCE OF THE MOROCCAN REGIME. IT WOULD CUT MOROCCO OFF FROM THE REST OF AFRICA AND SERVE AS A SUBSIVIVE BASE FOR REVOLUTIONARY MOROCCAN GROUPS. FURTHERMORE, MOROCCO WOULD LOSE THE AREA'S VAST PHOSPHATE WEALTH.

15. MOROCCAN LEADERS HAVE ALSO VIEWED THE CONFRONTATION AS A COMPETITION BETWEEN MOROCCO'S MODERATE, OPEN, PLURALIST FORM OF GOVERNMENT AND ALGERIA'S REPRESSIVE, RADICAL, AUTHORITARIAN REGIME. THE MOROCCANS ALSO SEE THE STRUGGLE IN THE CONTEXT OF ONGOING ATTEMPTS TO RADICALIZE THE AFRICAN CONTINENT BY SUCH COUNTRIES AS CUBA, LIBYA, AND ALGERIA--ALL ARMED BY THE SOVIET UNION. (SECRET/NOFORN) VANCE

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